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ORIGINAL ARTICLES

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SOME PRACTICABLE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE MEDICAL PROFESSION *

PRESIDENT'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS

By H. G. BRAINERD, M. D., Los Angeles

We have reason to congratulate our profession for what it has accomplished in the matter of protecting the public since the last meeting of this Society, namely: the defeat of the so-called "quack quartet" amendments to our State Constitution. The campaign against these amendments was carried on by the League for Conservation of Public Health in a masterly and successful manner, and we tender to the League our congratulations. But we should bear in mind that this was accomplished by the help of that portion of the general public which believes in the altruism of our profession, believes that our efforts were actuated by our desire to protect the public, and not merely by selfish interests.

If the rising tide of poorly equipped aspirants to practice medicine—those who are trying to acquire the title of "doctor," and the right to treat the sick without the proper educational training—if this tide is to be checked, we as a united profession should do our utmost to influence our patients and acquaintances so that they will vote against any measure which tends to lower the standard of requirements for the admission to the practice of medicine. The work of poorly educated physicians must inevitably increase the length of disability as well as the mortality of the sick. And that our efforts should be made most effective in preventing dangerous legislation this coming session of the Legislature, every doctor in the State should join the League, which so successfully conducted the campaign last year.

* Read before the Fifty-first Annual Meeting of the Medical Society of the State of California, Yosemite Valley, May, 1922.

A few days ago a patient told me that he had been devoting his time to a physician for nearly a month, during which time he was put through a basal metabolism test, urinalyses, a blood count and a Wassermann test, a test meal and stomach contents analysis, tests to determine the condition of his bile, bismuth meal, and X-ray of stomach and bowels. After which he was presented with a bill for two hundred and fifty dollars, and the opinion that there was nothing the matter with him. In point of fact he was suffering from melancholia from an easily found cause.

Another man of moderate means told me recently that a surgeon performed an operation on him, attended him for two weeks after, and presented him with a bill for seven thousand five hundred dollars. Now it happened that several of this patient's friends had been operated for similar trouble, and some of them were able to leave the hospital sooner than he. And, as they had paid from one hundred to one thousand dollars, he naturally felt that he had been robbed.

Such experiences do not tend to increase the respect for the members of our profession as honorable citizens, or exalt them as learned physicians. It is this sort of thing that helps to foster and perpetuate quackery and charlatanism. Let each one of us remember that every time we are careless in the treatment of our patients, every time we violate the confidence reposed in us, every time we are unjust in our charges for our services, we are not only likely to make enemies for ourselves, but also enemies to the medical profession in general.

It is these, and similar embittering experiences, that are responsible in part, at least, for the establishment of new sects in medicine. The birth and survival of any new sect is concrete proof that something is lacking in the principles or the practice of medicine at that period.

Thus, a century ago, Hahnemann was able to found a new sect because it voiced a protest by the public against the large and nauseous doses prescribed by the old-line physician. A generation ago Doctor Still was able to establish a new sect largely because by his method a physical examination was made, an opinion promptly given, and treatment begun immediately without the bugbear of delayed and expensive laboratory examination and purchase of expensive drugs. And this sect, by reason of less expensive services, prompt diagnosis, and treatment beginning at once, has appealed to a large number of people.

It is an unfortunate fact that the public everywhere exaggerates our shortcomings and minimizes our good deeds. Indeed, it never seems to occur to most persons that every successful step in

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Santa Clara County Medical Society (reported by E. P. Cook, secretary)—The May meeting of the society was held in the society rooms in the Twohy building, San Jose. The meeting was in charge of Frank H. Paterson, counselor from the fifth district of the State society. Reports from the State convention were given by F. H. Paterson, C. M. Richards, M. W. Kapp, J. H. Shephard, and G. L. Barry.

W. Lester Wilson was accepted to membership by transfer from the Stanislaus County Medical Society.

New Home for the Stanford School of Nursing—The trustees of Stanford University opened the new nurses' home on the 31st of March, with formal exercises in the afternoon and a dance in the evening. The presentation of the home to the university was made by William Mayo Newhall, president of the board of trustees, and accepted by Ray Lyman Wilbur, president of Stanford University.

SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County Medical Society (reported by N. Juell, secretary)—The June meeting of the Society was held at Santa Rosa on the 8th, with ten members and two visitors present, and twenty-five members absent. Max Rothschild spoke on tuberculosis with special reference to modern treatment. J. H. McLeod and C. N. Mooney reported to the Society on the activities of the annual meeting of the California State Society at Yosemite.

The Society took necessary steps to secure the data provided for by resolution of the House of Delegates in order to increase the panel of our own members to practice industrial medicine.

STANISLAUS COUNTY

Stanislaus County Medical Society (reported by R. E. Maxwell, secretary)—The meeting of May 12 was held at a local hotel with President Fields in the chair. Members present were Mottram, Benson, Surryhne, Finney, Sturgis, Morgan, Bemis, McPheeters, Fields, Young, Reamer, De Lappe, McKibbin, and Maxwell.

Dr. Lester Wilson was given a transfer to the Santa Clara County Society. A. E. Julien of Turlock was elected to membership.

Dr. F. R. De Lappe, as chairman of the fee schedule committee, submitted a tentative report. A resolution was passed instructing the delegate to the State society to bring before the House of Delegates a recommendation that they appoint a State committee for consideration of a uniform fee schedule.

A paper by Dr. Polak upon "Abuse of Caesarian Section" was read by Dr. Surryhne.

New Associate Secretary—Following out the policies endorsed by the Council, the Publicity Bureau has appointed Dr. Howard H. Johnson full-time associate secretary of the State Medical Society.

Dr. Johnson's academic degree is from Miami, and his medical degree from the University of Cincinnati. His intern service was in the Cincinnati General Hospital, and he has since that time had a large and important experience, both in military and civil life, in medical administrative work. The co-operation of members of the State Society in making his services useful to the public and the physicians is requested.

EXTENSION WORK

The following additions have been made to the Extension Lecture courses offered by members of the State Society to local societies: (See November, February and March Journals for other lectures.)

A. GOTTLIEB, M. D.,

603 Consolidated Realty Building, Los Angeles.

1. Physiotherapy in Orthopedic Practice:

The usefulness and mode of application of the various physical modalities in deformities acquired after accidents. Statistics and lantern slides.

2. The Painful Foot:

A discussion of the possible painful foot conditions of local and remote origin. Prevention and treatment.

3. Backsprains and Their Treatment by Physical Therapy:

Diagnosis of sprains by elimination and early treatment with physical and mechanical modalities in acute conditions. Physio-therapy of chronic backsprains.

4. Metatarsalgia:

Etiologic factors, with special reference to the high-heeled shoe, which cause contracture of the "tendon Achilles," and leads to metatarsalgia: Prophylaxis and treatment. Lantern slide demonstrations.

5. Orthopedic Principles in the Early Treatment of Injuries:

A discussion of immobilization vs. mobilization and preventive physiotherapy. Statistics and lantern slides.

Upheld by the Highest Court—The laws of Ohio relating to the practice of medicine and surgery require that all who engage in the treatment of the sick in that State, including chiropractors, shall first submit to examination by the State Medical Board in certain fundamental branches. The constitutionality of these laws has now been passed on by the Ohio Court of Appeals, the Ohio Supreme Court, and the United States Supreme Court, the last named having refused to review the decision of the Supreme Court of Ohio which, in an unanimous opinion, declared the laws constitutional and approved the rules and regulations of the State Medical Board. Thus the great principle for which the medical profession of this country has contended has been approved and upheld by the Appellate Court and the Supreme Court of one of our greatest States and, finally, by the Supreme Court of the United States. The opinion of the Supreme Court was handed down by Chief Justice Taft.

With characteristic effrontery, as is stated in current accounts of the situation, a rather large group of the chiropractors of Ohio announced, at a meeting in Akron, that they would "go to jail" before they would obey the law, even though that law has been upheld by the highest court of the land. Of course, the next move of these law violators and law defiers will be to get a little law of their own, if they can, at the hands of the next Legislature in Ohio. It is to be hoped that the members of that Legislature will be so informed that they will be convinced of the righteousness of the principle for which the medical profession contends, and it is to be hoped, too, that the public will be so informed as to their own interests in the matter as to demand from the Legislature that the chiropractor shall be no less well qualified in fundamental subjects than any other who is to be allowed to treat the sick. (American Medical Association Bulletin, April 15, 1922.)